

(Washington D.C.)- Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3rd) has been appointed to fill a vacated position on the U.S. House International Relations Committee. The committee oversees U.S. relations with foreign nations including jurisdiction over efforts to combat international terrorism and nuclear proliferation, as well as other international programs and organizations such as the United Nations. Carnahan this morning was assigned to subcommittees on terrorism and the Middle East and will be seated with the committee this afternoon when Condoleezza Rice testifies on behalf of the State Department's Fiscal Year 2007 budget. The seat being filled by Carnahan was vacated by Democrat Robert Menendez who last month was appointed by newly elected New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine to fill his vacated U.S. Senate seat.

Besides dealing with important issues of the day regarding international security and terrorism, the appointment compliments the growing international presence in the greater St. Louis area. Additionally, with a broad international role, the committee appointment could provide businesses and organizations in the region such as the World Trade Center in Clayton, MO, with assistance. In a letter of support for Congressman Carnahan's appointment to the committee, Anna Crosslin, President and Executive Director of the St. Louis based International Institute, offered that Carnahan serves the district with Missouri's largest representation of international residents and that he "embodies the personal qualities of integrity, intelligence, and humaneness, so vital if America is to thrive in the new century."

Likewise, in a similar letter, Dr. Richard Meyers, the President of Webster University, noted that "It is extraordinarily important that the heartland of the U.S. be strongly represented on the House International Relations Committee...St. Louis, Missouri, and the nation need the visibility and the increased effort it needs to assume additional enlightened global leadership."

With international terrorism and the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea posing significant threats to U.S. security and interests, Congressman Carnahan views his new position on the International Relations Committee as an opportunity to do vital work at a very important time.

Regarding his appointment Carnahan said: "For our St. Louis region and the state of Missouri there will be great opportunities in relation to business and promotion as well as serving a growing international community. For our nation, at a time of war and great international tension, and growing anti-American sentiment, it is critical that we wisely use our nation's military, economic and diplomatic powers to stop terrorism and nuclear proliferation and to rebuild our damaged relations with other countries."

Committee Jurisdiction

The House Committee on International Relations has oversight and legislative responsibility for international security, non-proliferation and disarmament issues, international crime, narcotics, terrorism and espionage issues, U.S. Department of State and related agency operations, U.S. foreign assistance, and various other issues related to U.S. foreign policy interests. In general, the Committee conducts ongoing meetings with foreign political leaders and United States government Administration officials. These meetings allow Committee Members the opportunity to explore the effectiveness of the Administration's implementation of foreign policy.

http://www.house.gov/international_relations_democratic/

Committee History

The Committee on International Relations traces its origins to November 29, 1775. It was on that date that the Continental Congress by resolution created a committee "for the sole purposes of corresponding with our friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world." The members chosen for this committee were Benjamin Franklin--who served as chairman and guiding spirit-- Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Johnson, Jr., John Dickinson, and John Jay. Known as the first Committee of Correspondence, the committee itself soon changed its name to the Committee of Secret Correspondence.

http://www.house.gov/international_relations_democratic/history.html